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THE FORESTER'S LAST COMING HOME.

THIS beautiful engraving, so full of sad suggestion, is from an oil painting by a Munich artist. It represents a scene only too liable to occur in a country where game-laws are enforced with the strictness observed throughout Germany.

The passion for poaching appears to be something inherent in the character of the common people, especially in the more mountainous portions of Europe. This passion may be said to arise from two different sources. The more noble of the two is that natural feeling of aristocratic freedom, found always among the inhabitants of the mountains, as if the wild and majestic scenery filled the souls of its native-born children with a sovereign necessity for liberty. The very difficulty of conquering the mys-

the poacher's life in the "merrie green wood;" and in Germany the charm has the same potency.

What traveler through the Bavarian Tyrol does not remember with delight the picturesque and solitary cottages of the game-keepers, or foresters, scattered at intervals along on the hill-sides.

These cottages appear like ideal sylvan retreats. Overshadowed with trees, and often beautiful with creeping ivy and flowering vines, they seem intended for the home of peace and happiness instead of as headquarters for the carrying out of a hard and oppressive law, against which the common people stand in constant and open rebellion.

The interior of a forester's cottage is a true picture of the character of its inmates. If there is a mistress, one is struck by the neatness of the simple furniture, and the rows of glistening tin and wooden ware,

while the air rings with sardonic laughter. Other tales there are, too, truer and sadder, of desperate encounters with poachers in the forest, where deadly hatred and bad blood had full sway, when the peasant, refusing to submit to arrest, fell dead by the rifle ball of the forester, or, successful in his escape, saved up revenge in his heart, until, secreted behind some forest thicket, he sent the passing game-keeper his message in a ball of lead, leaving him stretched helpless on the turf, to be carried to his cottage in the arms of his assistants—the Last Coming Home!

SUPERSTITION.—It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him—for one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. Plutarch saith well to that purpose: "Surely," saith



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teries of the mountain regions awakens a spirit of daring and adventure, fanned into constant activity by the fresh and exhilarating air of the hill-sides, and which naturally finds its outlet in the always fascinating pastime of tracking and hunting the deer and chamois in their secluded retreats.

Another motive, which leads many a peasant to follow the dangerous profession of a poacher, might be called a species of Communism, that universal desire breaking out all over the world to equalize and appropriate. The game runs wild in the forest, the game is free for the common people, it is their right; and with these ideas working in his somewhat clouded mind, the surly peasant shoulders his rifle and goes into the forest, choosing the secret ways and hidden paths where he may escape the sharp eyes of the game-keeper, and, undisturbed, secure the prize which he regards as his by right.

The game-laws of England have, for centuries, given rise to numberless tales and ballads, proving what a powerful web of fancy and romance is thrown around

which form the primitive table utensils of the family. To give life to the picture, there are rosy-cheeked, sturdy little boys and girls, cats and dogs in plenty, and on the wall the painted wooden clock from the Black Forest, and numbers of rifles, game bags and hunting knives, with here and there, over the door or window, a deer's head with its branching antlers.

On long summer evenings one may sit outside on the bench by the door with the forester and his assistants, all robust, sturdy men, picturesquely clad in hunting suits of dark green with a feather stuck jauntily on one side of the felt hat; and while the mountain outlines form clear silhouettes against the starry sky, and the stillness of night fills the hills, there are tales to be told of forest life, full of stirring adventure or mystery. There is the legend of the Phantom Poacher, who appears climbing up the wooded hill-side just after nightfall, his shoulders loaded with game—and woe to the zealous forester who sets foot to follow him. Blinded with false vision he falls crushed and mangled over the rocks,

he, "I had rather a great deal men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch, than that they should say that there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born" as the poets speak of Saturn; and, as the contumely is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men. Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation: all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these, and createth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men; therefore atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further, and we see the times inclined to atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil times; but superstition hath been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new "*primum mobile*," that ravisheth all the spheres of government. The master of superstition is the people, and in all superstition wise men follow fools; and arguments are fitted to practise in a reversed order.—Bacon.